NASA study says Greenland's ice loss is due to 'gigantic invisible wave'

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We've discovered a new mode of ice loss in Greenland. A new NASA study finds that during Greenland's hottest summers on record, 2010 and 2012, the ice in Rink Glacier on the island's west coast didn't just melt faster than usual, it slid through the glacier's interior in a gigantic wave, like a warmed freezer pop sliding out of its plastic casing. The wave persisted for four months, with ice from upstream continuing to move down to replace the missing mass for at least four more months. Seen here is the Rink Glacier in western Greenland, with a meltwater lake visible center. Credits: NASA #nasa #icebridge #earth #glacier #greenland #ice

Aside from assessing the wonders of outer space, the National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA) also does remarkable research on the Earth's environment.

Its latest study discovered that Greenland's polar ice is melting at a much higher rate than first anticipated—and is completely invisible to the naked eye.

The international space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) has found that the massive loss of ice at Rink Glacier was due to what appeared to be an "invisible wave" coming from beneath the grounds.

With the aid of the Greenland GPS Network (GNET), scientists were able to track numerous glaciers and their loss of mass since 2010.

To replace the massive chunks of missing mass, ice caps from upstream repeatedly shifted down in its place, reported NASA in its official website.

"You could literally be standing there and you would not see any indication of the wave," said JPL scientist and study co-author Eric Larour, describing the unusual cause of the meltdown. "You would not see cracks or other unique surface features."

Moreover, the team also noticed that the wave moved through the giant ice blocks at an alarming speed of about 2.5 miles during the two hottest recorded summers in Greenland, on 2010 and 2012.

Meanwhile, the study's lead scientist, Surendra Adhikari, further described the ongoing phenomena.

"We know for sure that the triggering mechanism was the surface melting of snow and ice, but we do not fully understand the complex array of processes that generate solitary waves," Adhikari explained. "This systematic transport of ice in fall to midwinter had not been previously recognized." **Khristian Ibarrola/*JB***